

CHAPTER 7: LIBRARIES

The Fort Worth Public Library is in its second century of service to its communities. The Long Range Services Plan (LRSP), along with the service priorities identified, shapes the nature, scope, and depth of library collections and services. The mission of the Fort Worth Public Library is “to welcome and support all people in their enjoyment of reading and recreational materials, and their pursuit of learning and information.”

This chapter provides information on current library facilities, material collections, and future service needs.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Facilities

The Fort Worth Public Library consists of 15 community facilities that include one central library, two regional libraries, ten neighborhood libraries, two library stations in public housing communities, and a Municipal Reference Center at City Hall.

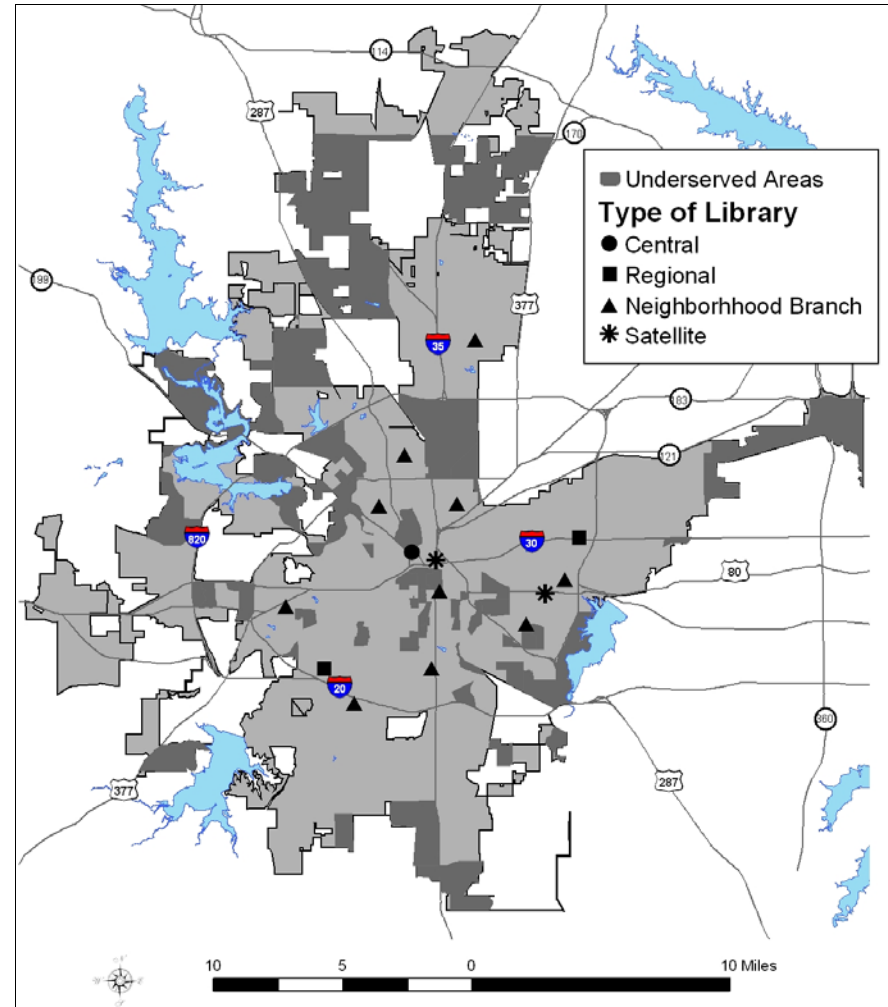
The Downtown Central Library serves the entire city and county as a reference and information resource center through the Inter-Library Loan Program funded by the Texas State Library. The Central Library also includes the youth and multimedia centers, as well as a computer lab and exhibit gallery. Plans exist for the addition of second and third floors to the Central Library.

Two full service regional libraries, intended to serve 100,000 people each, are located in the Eastside and TCU/Westcliff sectors. In addition, ten branch libraries provide services to Fort Worth communities. Seven of these facilities were built in the 1960s originally designated to serve a population of 20,000. Services are also provided through two public housing communities: the Cavile Outreach Opportunity Library (COOL) and Butler Outreach Library (BOLD). Known as “library stations,” these facilities are not owned by the City. Instead, the Fort Worth Housing Authority provides the structures, while the library provides materials, programs, and staff. The facilities are intended primarily to introduce children to library services, and to provide them with the resources necessary for homework assignments and reading for pleasure.

Areas in the Far West, Far Northwest, Far North, Far South, and Far Southwest Sectors are not serviced by a neighborhood library. The LRSP aids in determining the level and type of services required to meet the needs of the existing and projected populations. The plan includes maps identifying underserved areas to guide decisions about capital expenditures.

The 2004 Bond Program includes a neighborhood branch library for the Far Northwest sector in City Council District 7. Additional neighborhood facilities are needed, as well as defined services to under/unserved communities. LRSP

Existing Library Facilities and Underserved Areas



The map shows the location of the fifteen (15) existing library facilities. General areas of the city that are not served by existing facilities are mostly outside Loop 820. A neighborhood branch library to be located in the Northwest sector was included in the 2004 bond program. The E.M. Shamblee Branch Library is scheduled for relocation to the Evans/Rosedale Business District in 2006. (Sources: Fort Worth Public Library and Planning Department, 2004.)

information helps determine facility location and/or mode of service delivery. Libraries should be located on major streets, and in areas of high visibility to best serve the population. Growth centers, with dense residential development and commercial activity, are ideal locations for libraries.

Technology

Computers and Internet access are fundamental components of today's public library services. Computers provide access to the Library's automated catalog, the Internet, subscription databases, and locally mounted educational CD-ROMS. The Library offers computer literacy classes in English and Spanish at the Central Library's Computer Lab and several branches. Patron registration information, circulation records, holdings inventory and maintenance are computerized. In 2005, a new Integrated Library System was installed, the network was upgraded, and new computers were purchased for public and staff use.

Collections

The Library's collection enables Fort Worth residents to enrich their personal lives; educate themselves in areas of personal interest; develop informed opinions about issues of the day; gather, use, and evaluate information successfully; and gain an appreciation and understanding of other people, cultures, and viewpoints.

The collections emphasize current, popular, up-to-date materials for all age levels in a variety of formats, including books, CDs, videos, DVDs, and books on tape and CD, as well as electronic and internet resources. The Library is increasing its Spanish and Vietnamese language holdings in order to better serve these populations.

A 2001 study revealed that almost 70 percent of the Library's materials in health, nutrition, technology, science, law and geography were over six years old. Since then, the Library has been conducting an aggressive weeding program to withdraw outdated materials in these areas.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Library's overarching goal is to deliver the highest level of customer-oriented public library service to all citizens of Fort Worth through access to a broad range of print and non-print contemporary and historical materials.

Provide materials and collections that are timely and accurate and that best respond to user needs.

- Ensure that users check out over 4.78 million items by September 2006.
- Attain 1.67 million web page visits by September 2006.
- Implement strategies from the Technology Plan, including access to the latest digital information and communications in 2006.

Present programming and outreach efforts that meet the needs and desires of users.

- Ensure total program attendance of 193,000 by September 2006.

Comparison of Public Library Statistics for 2004

	Fort Worth	Dallas	Austin	El Paso	San Antonio
Circulation* per Capita	8.36	5.09	4.76	2.58	3.84
Visits per Capita	4.80	3.87	4.39	3.10	2.55
Questions per Capita	3.39	4.83	0.46	2.79	1.99
Total Square Feet per Capita	0.77	0.78	0.57	0.30	0.29
Materials Budget per Capita	3.76	3.43	1.88	2.30	1.56
Annual Budget FY 2003/2004 per Capita	25.03	19.74	24.85	13.40	12.66
2004 Population	534,694	1,188,580	678,769	563,662	1,530,900
Total Facilities	15	23	23	11	21

* Number of materials checked out. Does not include materials used in library.

When compared with other cities in Texas, the Fort Worth Public Library ranks highest in circulation. (Sources: Fort Worth Public Library, Dallas Public Library, Austin Public Library, El Paso Public Library, and San Antonio Public Library, 2004.)

- Develop and implement an Emergent Literacy Program in 2006.
- Issue 35,000 new library cards by September 2006.
- Implement Phase 2 of Plan of Services for Spanish Speaking People in 2006.

Provide facilities that are conducive to the delivery of quality library and information services.

- Meet minimum cleanliness and condition standards during regularly scheduled inspections 95 percent of the time.
- Acquire property for the new Northwest Branch Library by 2006 and make plans to open by 2008.
- Construct a new Shamblee Branch Library, adjoined to the newly renovated Tommy Tucker School, to open in 2006.
- Develop plans to implement a cosmetic renovation for Seminary South Branch.

Provide carefully selected and trained staff to meet the needs of users.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive staff development program in 2006.
- Conduct a staffing analysis to address perceived public service inadequacies in 2006.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Fort Worth Public Library's services will be guided by the following policy and strategies:

Current Policy

- Provide services that are responsive to the needs and desires of the community.

Strategies

- Provide facilities in conveniently located, easily accessible areas of the city.
- Pursue all possible funding sources to augment program planning, facility maintenance, and collection management.
- Seek cooperative relationships in service delivery and expand resource sharing partnerships among area libraries.
- Make available diverse materials and resources, including electronic and online services.
- Provide diverse programming to mirror the populations served.
- Provide and enable staff to serve diverse populations effectively.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Community Programs

The Library offers system-wide programs celebrating national holidays and remembrances. The Summer Reading Program, available through all library branches and a number of off-site locations, encourages young people of all ages to read by providing special presentations, activities, and rewards. Libraryfest, sponsored by

Fort Worth Central Library



The street level floor of the Central Library opened to the public in 1999. The architectural plan for the facility provides for additional expansions. If funding is available, a second floor should be completed by 2015. (Source: Fort Worth Public Library, 2001.)

Super Saturday at the Library



Families participate in one of many Super Saturday programs at the Central Library. (Source: Fort Worth Public Library, 2005.)

the Fort Worth Public Library Foundation, annually attracts more than 5,000 people. The annual Book & Author events sponsored by the Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library, Inc. are designed to focus on literature and fundraising.

The individual branch libraries offer programs that change based on the needs of the community. Programs responding to the Library's priorities such as genealogy and local history, cultural awareness, lifelong learning, information literacy, and general information are provided citywide. The Central Library's teen center, called Our Place, attracts teens/young adults 14-19 years of age. The Teen Advisory Council provides input to support programming for the Center as well as teen programming, materials and services system wide. The Outreach Services Unit takes programming, materials, and services out to communities.

Community Partnerships

The Library often partners with other agencies to provide learning activities. Such partnership opportunities include the Fort Worth Independent School District, Trinity Valley and Country Day schools, Imagination Celebration, the United Way, the Bridge, Da Village, and Early Childhood Matters.

The Cities of Fort Worth, Benbrook, Burleson, Haltom City, Keller, Richland Hills, and Watauga have an agreement (Metropac) by which residents of the seven cities may use their library card from the city in which they reside in any of the public libraries without charge. Fort Worth provides automation services for these libraries, for a fee.

Capital Improvement Projects

Capital improvements identified for fiscal years 2006-2025 are listed in the Capital Improvement report, along with estimated costs, and potential funding sources. The list includes the Northwest Branch Library project which is scheduled for completion in 2008.

In the future, the City may explore expanding the Northwest Branch Library to a Regional Library/Community Center. Facility size is determined by population and supported by identified geographical locations of underserved areas.

Youth Programs



Harry Potter Party at Central drew a crowd of over 500 as they eagerly anticipated the new release. (Source: Fort Worth Public Library, 2003.)



A packed house in the Hazel Harvey Peace Children's Center greeted Junie B. Jones and the Smelly Bus. (Source: Fort Worth Public Library, 2005.)